

REMARKS

Summary

In response to the drawing objections, Figures 6 and 7 have been amended as requested by the Examiner and in response to the substantive rejection of the claims, the features of the allowable dependent claims have been added to the independent claims. Therefore, the application is now in allowable form.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1, 3-7, 9-11, and 14-16 are pending, with Claims 1, 10 and 15 being independent. Claims 2, 8, 12, 13, 17, and 18 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 1, 3-7, 9-11, 14, and 15 have been amended for reasons unrelated to patentability to improve their form. In addition, independent Claims 1, 10, and 15 have been amended to overcome a substantive rejection.

Requested Action

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding objections and rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Drawing Objections

Figures 6 and 7 have been objected to because they are not labeled as prior art. In response, while not conceding the propriety of the objection, these figures have been so labeled, thereby rendering the objection moot. In addition, corrected formal drawings of these figures are

also attached.

Abstract Objection

The Abstract is objected to for minor informalities therein. In response, while not conceding the propriety of the objection, the Abstract has been amended to address the points raised by the Examiner, thereby overcoming the objection.

Specification Amendments

The specification has been amended to improve its form.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has indicated that Claims 8, 13 and 18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, Applicants have incorporated the features of Claim 8 into independent Claim 1, incorporated the features of Claim 13 into independent Claim 10, and incorporated the features of Claim 18 into independent Claim 15. In addition, Applicants have canceled Claims 2, 8, 12, 13, 17, and 18. Therefore, all of the claims remaining in the case are now in allowable form.

Substantive Rejections

Claims 1-6 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, as being anticipated by the patent to Hiroshima et al. (European Patent Document No. 1 055 979). In addition, Claim 7 is rejected

under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over the patent to Hiroshima et al. in view of the patent to Yoshida et al. (JP 2001-305809) and Claims 10-12 and 14-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the patent to Hiroshima et al. in view of the patent to Osawa (JP 63-237068).

Response to Substantive Rejection

In response, while not conceding the propriety of the rejections, independent Claims 1, 10, and 15 have been amended to include the features of allowable Claims 8, 13, and 18, respectively, thereby rendering the rejections moot.

Additional Claim Amendments

Applicants have amended Claims 1, 3-7, 9-11, 14, and 15 for reasons unrelated to patentability to improve their form.

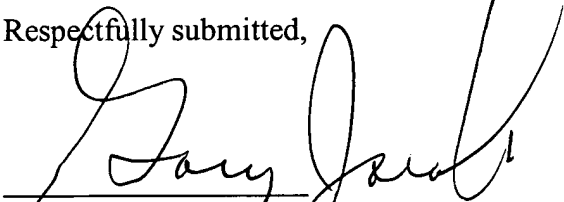
Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the application is now in allowable form.

Therefore, early passage to issue is respectfully solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Jacobs", is written over a horizontal line.

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IN THE DRAWINGS

Please make the following amendments to the drawings, as shown on the attached corrected formal drawings.

Figure 6:

Add the legend --Prior Art-- thereto.

Figure 7:

Add the legend --Prior Art-- thereto.